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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Gul Brings Together Iraqi Sunnis, Khalilzad in Istanbul -
Sabah
Barzani Offers to Mediate between Ankara-Turkey's Kurds -
Milliyet
Turkey Persuades Sunnis to Enter Iraqi Elections - Hurriyet
Haaretz: Syria Improves Scud Missiles - Milliyet
Nazarbayev Elected President for the Third Time in
Kazakhstan - Hurriyet
Kazakh 'Sultan' Nazarbayev - Milliyet
Ambassador Wilson: I Came Here to Improve Turkey-US Ties -
Milliyet 12/4
Ambassador Wilson Arrives in Ankara 6 Months Later - Aksam
12/4
Wilson, Former Musician Turned Diplomat - Sabah 12/4
Mehlis to Quit Hariri Investigation Over Threats - Sabah
12/4
Abbas Gives Palestine Passport to Pope Benedict XVI - Sabah
12/4
EU Warns US against Capital Punishment - Milliyet 12/4
New US Ankara Ambassador Speaks Turkish - Aksam 12/3
Bob Deutsch Warns Iraq to Block PKK from Entering elections
- Hurriyet 12/3
10 US Troops Killed in Fallujah - Sabah 12/3

OPINION MAKERS

Iraqi Sunnis, Khalilzad Expect Active Turkish Role on Iraq -
Yeni Safak
Iraqis Want US Troops Out of Iraq - Cumhuriyet
CIA Planes Have Used British Military Airports 210 Times -
Yeni Safak
The Economist: Turkey Has an Image Problem - Radikal
Third Round in the 'Saddam Show' - Radikal
Israel Strikes Gaza Again - Radikal
Bush Protested for Climate Change Policy in 32 Countries -
Yeni Safak
Chavez: Venezuelan Opposition a 'Puppet' of US - Cumhuriyet
Amb. Wilson Arrives in Turkey 6 Months After Edelman Leaves
- Yeni Safak 12/4
Athens Urges Turkey to Recognize Ecumenical Status of
Patriarchate - Radikal 12/4
CIA Planes Flew Over Germany 437 Times - Zaman 12/4
Rice in Europe to Counter Charges on CIA Planes - Cumhuriyet
12/4
Egypt Debates How to Coexist with Muslim Brotherhood - Zaman
12/4
Al-Qaida Commander Rabia Killed on Pakistan-Afghan Border -
Zaman 12/4
Russia Wins Chechnya Elections - Yeni Safak 12/4
Pentagon Acknowledges Bribing Iraqi Press for Positive
Coverage - Cumhuriyet 12/3
Israel Successfully Tests Defense Missiles - Yeni Safak 12/3

BRIEFING

Ambassador Wilson Arrives in Ankara: Newly appointed US
Ambassador to Turkey, Ross Wilson, arrived in Ankara on
Saturday, Turkish papers reported over the weekend. Wilson

ANKARA 00007138 002 OF 006

said in his arrival statement after a brief introduction in
Turkish that he is very pleased to be in Turkey. 'I've
waited a long time for this. And I believe Turkey has
waited a little while as well for a new American ambassador.
I look forward to exploring Turkey, getting to know the
people of this wonderful country, and working with the
citizens of Turkey, and the leaders of this country to
further develop US-Turkish relations and cooperation on the
many common interests that we share, and the many areas in
which we need to work as allies, friends, and partners
together in the coming years,' Wilson said. Wilson is
expected to present his credentials to President Sezer in
the coming days.

Deutsch on Iraq, Upcoming Elections: Weekend papers report
US Deputy Coordinator for Iraq, Robert Deutsch as telling
the press after meeting with Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA)
Undersecretary Ali Tuygan that 2006 will be an important
year for Iraq to become a pluralist, federal and democratic
country. 'Turkey contributes positively to this process,'
Deutsch said. The constitution written by the Iraqis will
cover issues such as the status of Kirkuk, Deutsch said. On
recent attempts by the PKK-linked parties to take part in
Iraqi election, Deutsch expressed determination that the
Iraqi electoral commission will not allow groups that pursue
violence to run in the polls. Deutsch added that he
believed the Iraqi elections would be fair, legitimate and
in line with international standards, adding that Turkey and
the international community continued supporting Iraq.

PCDK Rejects Ties with the PKK: Kurdistan Democratic
Solution Party (PCDK) chief in Kirkuk, Semsettin Hidir said
his party has engaged in good dialogue with all the Kurdish
parties, and rejected claims that the PCDK was established
by the PKK, Turkey's state-owned broadcaster TRT reported
Friday. Hidir noted that Kirkuk must be annexed to
Kurdistan, and blamed the Arabs and Turkey for
'exaggerating' the problem. Monday "Zaman" says that the
PCDK is set to run for Iraqi elections, with a target to win
at least 15 seats in 10 Iraqi cities, including Kirkuk.

Gul, Khalilzad, Hashemi Meet in Istanbul on Iraq Elections: Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, US Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad, and Tareq al-Hashemi of a leading Iraqi Sunni party met in Istanbul over the weekend as part of Turkey's efforts to persuade the Sunnis to take part in the upcoming Iraqi elections, Monday papers report. Khalilzad assured Iraqi Sunnis that the US was determined to help maximize the participation of Sunnis in December 15 elections. 'Iraq is going through a difficult transition process. For Iraq to succeed, it needs the participation of all communities in Iraq in upcoming elections,' Khalilzad told the press. Khalilzad stressed that the US did not plan to have permanent bases in Iraq, and that the country's natural resources belonged to all Iraqis. Khalilzad also thanked Turkey for helping Iraq. Tareq Al-Hashimi, the number two in the Iraqi Islamic Party which was representing Sunni groups in the Istanbul talks, underlined his community's desire to participate in the elections and have a say in the political process, but also voiced a number of concerns. 'We demand that massive military operations be ceased immediately,' Hashemi said in reference to a series of joint US-Iraqi operations against the insurgents in the western province of Al-Anbar over the last several weeks. Hashemi also asked for a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq. Minister Gul said that Turkey has been in touch with 'all Iraqi elements.' 'All elements of the Iraqi society must join the elections. All we want is to end the pain in Iraq and for a peaceful Iraq to replace it,' Gul said.

ANKARA 00007138 003 OF 006

Al-Mahdi Visits Ankara: Iraqi Deputy President Adil Abd al-Mahdi told Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul in Ankara on Friday following his visits to the US and Iran that everything will be settled following the December 15 elections in Iraq, weekend papers report. The Shiite politician told Gul that changes will be made to the Iraqi Constitution. He added that Iraq realizes the importance of the struggle against terrorism and of Kirkuk. Al-Mahdi noted that all the groups in Iraq were oppressed during the Saddam regime, and said that Baghdad expects Turkey to display understanding towards the groups in Iraq. Gul said that Turkey attaches great importance to the political process in Iraq. Al-Mahdi is seen as likely to assume the post of prime minister in the wake of Iraqi polls.

Kurdistan Applies for IMO Membership: The president of regional Kurdistan, Massoud Barzani, in an effort to strengthen the autonomy of Kurdistan, has applied for membership in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) despite the fact that Kurdistan has no shores, Monday "Aksam" reports. The Norwegian oil company DNO was helping Barzani to buy ten tankers with Greek Cypriot and Panama flags. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari asked for a seat in IMO for Kurdistan, drawing attention to the examples of Hong Kong and Faroe Islands to back his application. Kurdistan may participate as an observer at the IMO meeting to be held in Turkey next year, says "Aksam."

Barzani Attracts Kurds in Southeast Turkey: The president of Iraqi Kurdistan Massoud Barzani's rising popularity on the international arena attracts the Kurds in southeast Turkey to northern Iraq, Sunday "Cumhuriyet" says in a news commentary. Pictures of Barzani hang on the walls of businesses and homes in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast. Barzani's book, 'Barzani and the Kurdish National Freedom Movement' is being distributed in region. Barzani is giving scholarships of 100 USD per month to 250 Turkish students admitted into the Selahaddin University. It is claimed that young Kurdish Turks in the region are given Kurdish passports, with the hope of using them someday. The PKK is not pleased with the gradual rise in the support for Barzani. The non-violent policies of Barzani have a positive impact on the people in southeast Turkey. The Iraqi KDP is emerging as a serious, and perhaps the only, alternative here. The turmoil within the PKK is also

contributing to 'Barzanism.' The executions inside KONGRA-GEL, the murder of Kurdish dissident Hikmet Fidan, the efforts of the terrorist organization to exert influence over the other Kurdish movements in Iran and Syria, and the killings of prominent figures from these movements, such as Kemale Sor and Shapur Badoshiva, have given rise to serious campaigns against the PKK. Following the murder of Fidan, rumors of a 250-person death list have sped up the shift toward Barzani. The PKK is now being referred to in the region as a 'one-man movement.' Every Kurdish step toward becoming a state in northern Iraq brings the people of southeast Turkey closer to Barzani. Barzanists charge that the PKK has moved away from its initial ambitions, that it now rests on empty words, and that it has reduced its struggle merely to freeing Ocalan, says news commentary in "Cumhuriyet." The co-chairman of the newly-founded pro-Kurdish party, Ahmet Turk told "Radikal" on Monday that the PKK factor cannot be ignored in Turkey. The Kurdish problem can be solved by preserving Turkey's unitary structure, Turk said, adding that Ankara had to pass constitutional amendments to recognize Kurdish identity.

Turkish Airliner to Launch Flights to Northern Iraq:

ANKARA 00007138 004 OF 006

"Zaman" reported on Sunday that a private Turkish airliner Fly Air said they have turned down a request to transport US troops on the flights to Erbil and Suleymaniye in northern Iraq, slated to be launched in December. Fly Air said that they only considered transportation of civilians to other countries via Istanbul. However, according to unconfirmed reports, US troops will be sent to the United Arab Emirates and the Netherlands for short vacations. According to its schedule, Fly Air planes will fly from Istanbul to Erbil and Suleymaniye via Dubai, while departures from Dubai will end in Amsterdam via Erbil, Suleymaniye, and Istanbul.

Israel Denies Activities in Northern Iraq: Israeli Foreign Ministry has sent 'soothing' messages to Turkey over press reports claiming that retired Israeli military officers have been training the northern Iraqi Kurdish peshmerge, Monday papers cite the leading Israeli daily "Yedioth Ahronot." The Israeli Foreign Ministry said that some Israeli companies had acted on their own initiative, and that the Israeli government did not operate in the mentioned regions.

KDP Commander a Former PKK Member: Aziz Veysi, the commander of Kurdistan Special Forces in northern Iraq is a former member of the outlawed PKK, "Hurriyet" reports on Monday. Veysi has joined the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) after being charged with treason by the PKK. He was later promoted to command the Kurdistan Special Forces in the region.

Nicosia Blocks EU Support to Turkish Cyprus: Monday "Milliyet" reports on its front page that the European Union is punishing Turkish Cypriots for approving a 2004 referendum on a UN-backed plan to reunite the divided island, shelving a project to establish direct trade with the Turkish enclave in the north of the island because of Greek Cypriot objections. Nicosia blocks the EU project, demanding that Maras (Varosha) be given to Greek Cypriots.

Turkish Columnists Sued for Insulting Judiciary: A prosecutor filed charges against five journalists for comments they made on a conference about the World War I mass killings of Armenians by Ottoman forces, weekend papers report. The five respected columnists -- Murat Belge, Hasan Cemal, Ismet Berkan, Erol Katircioglu and Haluk Sahin -- face between six months and 10 years in jail if found guilty of the charges of 'insulting state judicial organs.' The trial of the columnists is scheduled to begin on February 7. Four of them write for the liberal "Radikal," and the fifth, Sahin, for the centrist "Milliyet" daily. The journalists had criticized efforts by prosecutors and nationalist lawyers to ban a September academic conference in Istanbul

dedicated to the massacre of Armenians by Ottomans. The five columnists had branded the court ruling as an attack against academic freedom, and a travesty of justice.

EDITORIAL OPINION: US-Turkey; Iraq; Iran

"Ambassador Wilson's Difficult Task"

Washington-based Ali Aslan wrote in the Islamist-intellectual "Zaman" (12/5): "Recently, two important changes in Ankara and Washington happened almost concurrently. The US assigned a new Ambassador to Ankara, and Turkey is sending Ambassador Nabi Sensoy to Washington in the near future. There is no doubt that, as highly experienced diplomats, both Ambassadors will establish a good working relationship. Even though full agreement on every issue might not be achieved, a dialogue will be possible on the most critical issues. Evidently, such a

ANKARA 00007138 005 OF 006

communication link has already been established in both capitals on the issue of Iraq. Turkey and the US have realized that they cannot be successful in the region without each other's support. The major test on this issue will come if a civil war or a process of division begins in Iraq in the aftermath of a gradual US pullout. At this point, Ankara should see the Kurdish political reality in Iraq, while Washington should be taking more responsibility in dealing with the separatist terrorism issue in Turkey. Reducing differences on Syria and Iran will be another challenging task for the two ambassadors. Despite Turkish efforts to paint a rosy picture, the US doesn't approve of Turkey's policy of engagement with the Syrian regime. Foreign Minister Gul's recent visit to Syria caused a serious disturbance in US policy circles. The US doesn't want to interfere with Turkey-Syria cooperation on economic and terrorism issues. But the US does not want Turkey to be politically engaged with the Asad regime while Washington is trying to isolate Syria. In other words, Turkey should not act like the weak link in the global lockout of Damascus. On the Iran issue, the recent radical rhetoric from Tehran and the Iranian nuclear program have helped the US to establish an international consensus. This has reduced the risk of a major disagreement between Turkey and the US in the near future. Regarding Cyprus, it seems there is no political or bureaucratic will in Washington to force a restart of the UN peace process. It appears that the US will continue to chip away at the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots and then will pass the ball to Europe. These are the main tasks ahead of Ambassadors Sensoy and Wilson. May God help them both."

"Iraq Messages From Bush"

Washington-based Yasemin Congar wrote in the mainstream "Milliyet" (12/5): "President Bush's recent speech outlining his 'Victory Plan' did not provide anything new for those who are following developments related to the Iraq war. The new element in the speech was that for the first time Bush acknowledged differences between planning in Washington and implementation on the ground in Iraq. President Bush responded to his critics by saying that the administration is not reluctant to learn from its mistakes, but is constantly revising its plans. Some commentators have interpreted the remarks as a recognition that there will be more blood and wasted resources. But still, it was refreshing to hear some facts about the Iraq war from President Bush. As "The New York Times" pointed out, for the first time in two years the description of the war by President Bush matched those of his generals on the frontline."

"The US, Iran and Turkey"

Yilmaz Oztuna opined in the conservative "Turkiye" (12/5): "In the aftermath of Undersecretary Nick Burns's strong accusations against Iran, the Iranian Foreign Minister visited Turkey. Some senior Turkish officials who met

Foreign Minister Mottaki provided him with valuable advice, but he seems unlikely to pay much attention to it. It is interesting to see the change of rhetoric in regimes such as Iran and Syria when they feel strong pressure from the outside world. The Syrian effort to butter up Turkey is almost comical. The similar attitude we have seen from Iran only indicates that there are some serious dangers ahead. . Iran has the intention to produce nuclear weapons - something that Tehran has not denied in a clear way. Iran claims that it is acting in 'self-defense,' but the Iranian President has also talked about wiping Israel from the world map. Washington considers military intervention as a last option, but it is also aware of the fact that diplomatic

ANKARA 00007138 006 OF 006

pressure is unlikely to produce a tangible result. An Iraq-style invasion is unlikely. The US intention is to divide Iran, just as it has divided Iraq. As for Iran, there is no sign of goodwill or intention to return to good terms with the US. For Iran, Turkey is seen as a rival and a collaborator with imperialist powers. Both the Syria and Iran issues are part of US national policy. Turkey should not make the mistake of seeing these as the personal policies of President Bush. If such a mistake is made, the consequences could harm Turkey as well."

MCELDOWNEY